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While we are compelled to regard the book as worthless, as far as its contributions to psychology or zoölogy are concerned, it has certain merits as a popular book; it is rather attractively written, even to an excessive point of word-painting, is earnest, and fairer-minded than most books which have a purpose beyond the truth that inheres in the subject.

4. — *Mirèio, a Provençal Poem.* By FREDERIC MISTRAL. Translated by HARRIET W. PRESTON. Boston: Roberts Brothers. 1872. pp. xx, 249.

MISS PRESTON, already favorably known by her translations from Sainte-Beuve, deserves the thanks of all lovers of poetry for having given them not only a remarkably faithful, but a singularly agreeable version of a poem, which, with some great faults, more than makes up for them by its greater beauties. In the midst of a time which seems more and more inclined to confound the sensuous with the sensual, it is no small pleasure to meet with a poet who

“Dallies with the innocence of love
Like the old Age,”

and renews for us the enchantment of youth. We think highly of Miss Preston's translation, though we believe that maturer reflection would induce her to change her mind about “consonantal assonances.” Any one who ever heard a rustic ballad-singer, even in this country, can hardly miss the conclusion that the earlier and imperfect assonance, as it appears in the *Chanson de Roland*, for example, could have all the effect of rhyme forced upon it by an emphatic prolongation of the vowel sound on which the assonance fell. How this is to be managed with consonants we find it hard to conceive. But we are bound to say that Miss Preston has indulged her whim sparingly. In general her language is sympathetic with the tone of sentiment, and her versification has the ease of original writing. One curious slip we have noticed,

“He hath made with his own hand
The sky, the sea, *the mountains, and the land,*”

of which the original is innocent. And we beg her on revision not to make a dissyllable of *dieu*, and to correct here and there the accentuation of her proper names. We should not point out such slight faults, if we had not a very sincere feeling of her general excellence as a translator. We cannot agree with her in thinking *Mirèio* “the most original poem of modern times,” nor in believing that the author “discarded all classical models,” unless, indeed, she mean *French* classical.

Mirèio does not seem to us in some respects so original as *L'abuglo de Castèl Cuillè*, nor more original than some of the poems of Alfred de Musset, written in pure French. It is an attempt to put the spirit and tone of the Greek pastoral romance into a modern form, parallel in intention with Mr. Morris's reproductions of Gower and Chaucer, and there was accordingly an instinctive felicity in Miss Preston's choice of one of Mr. Morris's Chaucerized measures for her version. No one can read the exquisite canto of the Leaf-picking without feeling that Mistral was trying to infuse so much as was possible of the innocent nakedness of *Daphnis and Chloe* into his theme without infringing the more conscious decency of modern ways. Nor are obvious reminiscences of Homer wanting. He must have heard from his professor at Montpellier the critical commonplace that in Homer and the Bible a messenger always delivers his message with a parrotlike repetition, nor had he forgotten it when writing his ninth canto. There is no harm in this, nay, there is a positive advantage in the associations it awakens, but we greatly doubt whether an enthusiastic pilgrim would find in Provence that antique simplicity of manners which Mistral has put there. The poem would be improved if it were shortened, especially if the whole episode of "The Witch" were left out. Mistral has endeavored to compress into a single canto all the Provençal superstitions past and present of which he has ever heard, and the consequence is, that they have a factitious air which makes them wearisome. Herrick is the only poet who has habitually exploited folklore with success, because he makes it an incident always, and not an object.

But the poem as a whole is most tenderly beautiful, and the naïve piety of the heroine, while in perfect keeping with the general tone, is something not only to move, but to purify the reader. Faith and religious feeling coming to us in this oblique fashion are more effective than when discharged point-blank by the professional missionary. One of Mistral's great merits is in description. His landscapes are not only lovely in themselves, but have caught that suggestiveness, that power, whether of inspiring a mood or sympathizing with it, that belongs to Nature herself. Miss Preston, we think, has transfused their spirit as well as their facts into her version. In some of the pathetic passages we were struck with the poverty of our language as compared with more southern tongues in endearing diminutives and trailing terminations on which the sorrow lingers, not without a certain sweetness of its own. For example, how far short (and through no fault of her own) is Miss Preston's

" 'O saints,' groaned Ramoun, stumbling in the gloom,
While shook his aged head, 'be kind and come !

Look on this little one ! she is my treasure !
 She is my plover ! pretty beyond measure,
 And good, and meet for life ! ”

of the original

“ ‘ O Santo, acò ’s ma pesqueirolò !
 O Santo, acò ’s ma denierolò !
 Gemis Mèste Ramoun en turtant dins l’ ombroun
 Emé sa tèsto atremoulido.
 O Santo, a-n-elo, qu’ es poulido,
 Innocentouno, enfantoulido,
 La vido ie counvèn. ’ ”

We wish Miss Preston would try her practised hand on something of Jasmin. He well deserves it, as Mr. Longfellow has proved, and is quite as fresh to most readers as Mistral.

5. — *The Songs of the Russian People.* By W. R. S. RALSTON, M. A.
 London : Ellis and Green. 1872.

THE ways of thought and life of the Russian people have been so vividly drawn by Tourguénef and Pisemski, in their tales and love-stories, that one who has once had his interest awakened by their descriptions welcomes with pleasure and curiosity any book promising still deeper insight into the interior life of this comparatively little known nation. The volume before us treats of their folk songs, mythology, demigods, and fairies, sorcery and witchcraft ; and though many of their quaint beliefs have yielded to the noonday light of Christianity and scepticism, there is still among the peasants a vigorous clinging to the old pagan ways of thought. It would be impossible, in the limits of a mere notice, to give more than a glance at each subject offered in this book, but those who are following up the streams of folk-lore and mythology in earnest hope of discovering the head source, will find this tributary well repay their search. In the first part of the volume before us we find a description of a prominent feature of Russian peasant life, i. e. the Khorovods, or spring festivals, which are celebrated with dance and song. Gayly dressed girls stroll through the village streets towards an open space in which the Khorovods are held, singing as they go : —

“ The beautiful maidens have come forth
 From within the gates, to wander out of doors.
 They have carried out with them a nightingale,
 And have set the nightingale upon the grass,
 On the grassy turf, on the blue flowers.
 The nightingale will break into song,
 And the beautiful maidens will begin to dance ;
 But the young wives will pour forth tears.